

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCV #0020 0041718  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 041718Z JAN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7411  
INFO RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS CARACAS 000020

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT (RSHORE)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA: 2006 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 175925

11. The following is post's update on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) for the 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism:

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's cooperation in international efforts against terrorism remained negligible. President Hugo Chavez continued to criticize U.S. counterterrorism efforts, enhanced cooperation with state sponsors of terrorism Cuba and Iran, and was unwilling to deny safe haven to members of Colombian terrorist groups.

Chavez' ideological sympathy for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) limited Venezuelan cooperation with Colombia in combating terrorism. FARC and ELN units continued to cross into Venezuelan territory for rest and re-supply with relative impunity. Splinter groups of the FARC and another designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), operated in western parts of Venezuela and were involved in narcotrafficking. The government pursued the latter with greater energy.

It remains unclear whether and to what extent the Government of Venezuela provided material support to Colombian terrorists. However, weapons and ammunition -- some from official Venezuelan stocks and facilities -- regularly turned up in the hands of Colombian terrorist organizations. The government did not systematically police the 1,400-mile Venezuelan-Colombian border to prevent the movement of groups of armed men or interdict arms flows to narcoterrorists.

A member of an Islamic extremist group in Venezuela placed two pipebombs outside the American Embassy in Caracas on October 23, 2006. Venezuelan police responded quickly, safely disposed of the two pipebombs, and immediately made one arrest. The investigation by Venezuelan authorities resulted in the additional arrest of the alleged ideological leader of the group. At year's end, both suspects remained in jail and prosecutors are pressing terrorism charges against them.

Responding to a complaint filed by two deported ETA terrorists in the Interamerican Human Rights Commission, BRV representatives negotiated and signed an "amicable settlement" in June 2006. The BRV agreed in the settlement to facilitate the naturalization of Basques who came to Venezuela as political refugees in the 1980's as a result of a bilateral agreement between the governments of Spain and Venezuela. After media reports revealed that ETA terrorists would obtain substantial benefits from the settlement, the BRV repudiated the terms of the agreement in December 2006.

Venezuelan citizenship, identity, and travel documents remained easy to obtain, making Venezuela a potentially attractive way-station for terrorists. International

authorities remained suspicious of the integrity of Venezuelan documents and their issuance process.

¶2. Embassy Point of Contact is Political Officer Adam Center (Office Phone: 011 58 212 907-8531, e-mail CenterAM@state.gov).

WHITAKER